## The MAN WHO WAS A MISFIT By Alice and Claude Askew

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fession of his multitudinous trans-

face she had learned that by ex-

effort at cheerfulness, despite the

rapid beating of her heart, that she

suggested that they should go into

the wood together, and that she

should hear all he had to say under

he spreading branches of the fa-

she said softly, "and my aunt or any

won't say anything, please, about

the confession, till we are right

away from the house. There are so

many other things that we can talk

about. About Bob, for instance. He

told me all about last night and how

good you had been to him. Then

there's Aunt Emily, too. Oh, George!

how grateful she must be to you,

for I know that in her heart she was

afraid of Lord Bardley and did not

really want to see me married to

mere recollection of what she had

the sunny path that led to the rock-

pleasant things. And so George fell

in with her whim, glad of the few

minutes' respite, to collect his fac-

still happily enough, as Peggy led

the way to the old tree, which was

not so very far away from the ouse after all, but which, since it off the beaten track, was little

They chatted, if not as lovers,

ulties for what was before him.

"We're so near the house here,"

mous "ogre."

It did not do to assume a long

YNOPSIS: A man in London is knocked down by an automobile. Returning to consciousness, he cannot place himself, though a letter in his pocket leads him to conclude that his name is George Annesley. But he finds himself taken for George Hilton, an African explorer, and perforce plays the part. Afterward he is pro-founly attracted by Peggy Marston, the beautiful young ward of Lady Westmere, and secures her promise that she will not wed Lord Bardley, a wealthy but far from desirable suitor. He learns, however, that he is supposed to be in love with Lady Sara Gervaise, a handsome woman, who has married another for money, and that her husband has just died under mysterious circumstances. Lady Sara sends for George and tells him that they are responsible for her husband's

He tries in vain to remember how he might have aided in the man's death. The matter is much gossiped about. Lady Sara goes abroad. Then George is almost killed by a mysterious garroter and Lady Sara hurries home to see him, to the great dismay of Peggy Marston, who hears the whole

When George recovers, he learns from Bob Faunt'eroy, a young friend, that Peggy still loves him. Bob is in a scrape himself, and in trying to get him out of it they have a terrible fight with a band of gamblers.

(CONTINUED FROM LAST SUNDAY.)

## CHAPTER XVIII

Fate Decides.



ELQUIRED all George's tact to wrestle with the situation and to spare Lady Westmere all the pain he could. He had hoped that she would never guess that her crime had been revealed to him; the lesson had been sharp enough as it was. It was hardly likely that Lady Westmere would ever again take upon herself to risk a forgery.

But it was useless to deny his knowledge of the actual facts; she would hardly have believed him had he done so. "Whatever I may know," he aid, "remains my own secret, buried forever in the depths of my heart. You need have no fear,

"But, Bob," she panted, "and Peggy! Oh, if they were to guess!"

"They will never guess," responded George, assuming as cheerful a tone as he could. "It's quite impossible that they should. No one will ever know except you and myself."

"And Morrison?" she groaned. "Who can say what Morrison may not do? Oh. I never thought that he would find me out, but he did, and he threatened me- cerned. It was all a trap to catch me-Rosa confessed oh, Mr. Hilton, if you knew the agony of mind that I've undergone!"

"Morrison has been paid, and a man can't blackmail unless he has got the proofs of what he affirms to hand. No one would believe a word of what Morrison

said." Lady Westmere recognized the truth of this. "I don't know how to thank you," she said, weakly, "and, oh, if I've done wrong I've been bitterly punished." As she spoke, she was slowly tearing the bills into little pieces and dropping the fragments into her lap. "You see" she went on, "the temptation came upon me so suddenly. I was being pressed for money. I had been gambling, and I couldn't meet my debts. I had thought-you remember that day when we met

have been given time. But she refused him. "You told her to refuse him, and, of course, you were quite right. He is not the sort of man who should marry Peggy, and I knew ft all the time, and hated myself for being ready to sacrifice her. If I'd been able to wait for another season she would have had other proposals. I knew that, too, but I couldn't afford to wait; and so I made the girl's life a misery to her. when Lord Bardley renewed his proposal. I told her that she must marry, that she was only a penniless girl, and that I couldn't afford to keep her. I was cruel-but every cruel word I spoke hurt me as

you, and drove with Sir James Duncan to Hurlingham?

-well, I'd thought that it would all be arranged that

Peggy should marry Lord Bardley, and then I should

as it hurt her. nd then the temptation came. I'd had dealings with Morrison at race meetings, and he said he would willingly discount bills for me if I could find a good guarantor. I knew I couldn't find a guarantor—there was no one to whom I could turn—everybody knew that I was near bankruptcy. And so I forged Lord Bardley's signature, and Morrison discounted the bills at once.

"I only had about a week's peace of mind, and then the question came, how was I to get the money? I tried-indeed, I tried every way I could think of before I put pressure on Peggy. Lord Bardley knew I was in difficulties, and he promised by difficulties, and he promised he would see me through them the moment she consented to be his wife. He little knew that the bills which he was to give me the ney to meet bore his own forged signature. I was deadly fear every day lest he should find out to

in deadly fear every day lest he should find out to whom I owed the money.

"Well, Peggy held out and insisted on waiting till the last minute-till the bills of which I had told her were actually due to be paid. I begged and entreated her in vain, I wept. I degraded myself—you may imagine the kind of life we have been leading!"

She pressed her thin hands to her face and the tears cozed between her ring-bedecked fingers. George was sorry for her, he knew what it must have cost to tell the story to which he had been listening.

He stole away at last, leaving her alone with her grief and her repentance. It seemed the best thing that he could do. Lady Westmere had a salve for her tears in the bits of torn paper which lay in her lap.

Peggy and Bob were in the garden. The girl was reposing comfortably in a hammock in the shade of a cluster of trees, and Bob, lounging by her side in a basket—sir, had been swinging her gently while he talked, she had been all impatience to get him to herself, knowing that there was something in the

Bob had told her the meaning of George's long conversation with Lady Westmere. He had anticipated a scoiding, and he had received it. Peggy was horrified at the idea that George Hilton should have been asked to intervene on her behalf. Her dignity was wounded; she felt herself humilated.

"Oh, Bob, how could you—how could you?" she cried. "If George"—she corrected herself hurriedly—"if Mr. Hilton had really cared he would have come to me before now. He would not have written to me in so formal and stilted a fashion—just a typewritten letter. I'm sure he has only helped us just because he thinks he must. Oh, Bob, what shall I say to him?"

"Desperate situations require desperate remedies,"
Bob had said in an attempt at self-justification. "I'm
not a bit sorry for what I did, Peggy, and you may
scold me as much as you like if it's any consolation to you. I'm ready to sit here meekly and listen. But tell you that Hilton does care. I'm as sure of it as I am of my own name. And he'll tell you so himself



She whispered the words, and they were almost inaudible for the twittering of the birds in the branches and the rustling of the leaves in the soft afternoon breeze, but they were the token that Bob

was forgiven. "Hilton's a fine fellow," he cried enthusiastically-"a man. I don't know that I've ever met any one whom I admire so much. You're a lucky girl, Peggy- him too, that she had always loved him ever since known to the pleasure-seek-"It's all over between you and me now" he said with gravity that was only half assumed. "We shan't be able to joke about being in love with each other any more. I've been completely cut out, and my hated

Here Bob proceeded to tell Peggy all that George had done for him; in fact, he narrated the events of the night before with hardly any reservation,

rival is the best fellow in the world."

"So you see I'm a free man again," he explained, "as far as my entanglement with Rosa Morrison is conas much herself. But I don't blame her, poor girl, and I never shall. It was all maneuvered by that rogue Morrison, who isn't her father after all. I expect he'll come down upon me for my debts, but I don't care about that. I'll get free of him somehow. And now"he drew down the corner of his lips with a tragic air, assumed for the occasion-"and now I shall have to face the redoubtable Janet Macalister. I only hope I shall be able to escape her toils as easily."

It was as he said this that George made his appearance. Bob scrambled to his feet and Peggy descended gracefully from the hammock. "I'm off," he

"Don't go. Bob," cried the girl in fluttering alarm. "You mustn't go really, I-I command you to stay where you are."

He only laughed at her embarrassment. "Two's company," he said, moving away. "I shall go for a walk by myself. See you at tea time." He turned. walk by myself. See you at tea time." He turned, waving his hand and laughing. His long legs had already carried him some yards away. Peggy, calling him by name, started to run after him, then, conscious of lack of dignity in the proceeding, stopped, flushed and panting, as George came to her side.

It required no keen subtlety on his part to guess, what had been happening. He knew that the girl would have liked to run away from him, to hide herself in the bushes—to sink into the earth—anything rather than face him at that moment. It was the surest indication of her love that she could have given him.

How sweetly pretty she was, too, with the soft color suffusing her cheeks, and her fair hair, where it peeped out from under the light straw hat she wore, glittering in the sunshine. She was dressed in white, and she wore a pink rose at her breast—as he looked at her George could not help thinking how that blush-ing rose contrasted with the purple orchid—a flower he would always hate. At the same moment the he would always hate. At the same moment the vision of a woman's sinuous figure clad in a black negligee, the sleeves falling away from the arms, rose before his eyes. And in his nostrils there was that curious intoxicating perfume which he associated

with Lady Sara.

It was but for a moment. The vision passed away, and in its place there was Peggy, so simple and natural in her fluttering dismay at his appearance, there was the perfume of the garden, there was the background of trees, and lawns, and flowers—a picture of sweetness and fragrance, and in its midst the sweetest and most fragrant of maids.

"I will leave it all to chance—to the impulse of the moment." As he had told himself the night before so he had repeated as he came to the girl across the lawn. Even now he did not know how impulse would impel him. He had thrown down the reins, abandoning himself to chance.

She drew herself up, nervously playing with the rose at her breast. She smiled timorously, deliciously. "Wasn't it silly of Bob to run away?" she faltered. "Shall we go and find him, Mr. Hilton?"

"Bob is a wise man, Peggy," said George. "He knew that I wanted to speak to you—he knew that I had a good deal to say."

He was letting himself go. He had no longer any

I had a good deal to say."

He was letting himself go. He had no longer any control over his tongue. Peggy had cast her spell upon him here in the sunlight and in the scented garden, just as she had done by the side of the Hurlingham lake, with the moon glistening through the trees and the faint strains of the Hungarian music coming to them from the distance.

Fate had decided, discretion was thrown to the winds.

"I love you, Peggy." he murmured-"my darling, I love you so!"

## CHAPTER XIX Peggy Learns the Truth.

OR a few wonderful moments the spell held him. George had forgotten everything save that ne was in a sweet-scented garden, a corner of the Fortunate Isles of romance to which he had

wed himself to drift, and that the savor of Peggy's kisses was on his lips.

For she had turned to him at once with a little stifled cry when he had proclaimed his love, and she had allowed him to take her in his arms, nestling her head against his shoulder, sighing out that she loved

you're both of you lucky." He sighed whimsically. she was a little girl, and had made him the here of her dreams.

It was not at all the way Peggy had been told by her aunt, and others who had taken it upon themselves to give her instruction in these matters, that she should behave under such circumstances, but then Peggy was really in love, and that made all the dif-

And so the spell fell upon them both. In the little knoll of trees where the hammock hung they were hidden from prying eyes; they were as completely by themselves as if in reality, as it seemed to them at the moment, the world held no more than their two

It was the voice of Bob in the distance calling to Prince, the great retriever of whom Lady Westmere was particularly fond, that aroused George to himself, striking consciousness of what he had done into his

He released Peggy from his arms and stepped back pace or two. Joy sped from him like a dream, and a look of consternation and something like remorse sprang to his eyes. His cheeks and even his lips were pale.

He had left everything to chance and impulse, and he had been betrayed into an avowal of his love before he had even allowed himself to make the confession which, above all things, it was necessary that he should make. He blamed himself now, blamed himself bitterly; for what pain might he not have to inflict upon the girl he loved, he who would readily have endured any agony himself rather than hurt

For a moment he was tempted to let things remain

For a moment he was tempted to let things remain as they were, to leave her in ignorance of the sword that hung suspended over his head. His heart yearned for her, he wanted to take her in his arms once more and to forget, as for a few moments he had forgotten. But he could not do so, the spell was broken.

The girl was looking at him with anxious eyes. Peggy, rosy and smiling, unconscious of the turmoit that was going on within his breast feeling only that the hour was their own and that there was so much more that she wanted to hear him say; though, if he only repeated over and over again that he loved her,

only repeated over and over again that he loved her, she would have been content with that.

"Peggy," he said, after a few moments, plucking up his courage to the inevitable, "my darling child, I have done wrong, and I hardly know what to say to excuse myself. There is no excuse, save that I love you so passionately and deeply."

"You have done wrong?" The smile faded from her lips.

lips. "I did wrong," he interrupted hurriedly, "in speaking before making a confession that I am bound to make. But all that I said is true, Peggy. You are the whole world to me."

The thought of Lady Sara flashed through Peggy's brain, and her heart which, in that moment of apprehension, had seemed to stand still, beat normally again. She was no longer afraid of Lady Sara. George could not really love the beautiful widow now, whatever he had done in the past,

But it was about Lady Sara that he wished to speak, she was sure of that. He would tell her of the influence, a bad influence, Peggy felt sure, that this woman had had upon his life, and how he had wrested himself free from it for Peggy's sake.

woman had had upon his life, and how he had wrested himself free from it for Peggy's sake.

"You have something to tell me?" she asked. She smiled up in his face with fresh assurance. "Oh, but it can't be anything, George, that will make the smallest difference. You told he that you love me, and that is enough. Nothing can take that away, and nothing that you could say would affect my love for you. No"—she clasped her hands prettily together—"nothing at all, not even if you were going to confess to me that you had committed a murder."

He did not smile back at her, at the very absurdity of the suggestion, as she had expected he would. His face was grave, but his eyes were very tender and loving. She felt that she had nothing to fear—what could she have to fear now? But, oh, how she wished that he would leave all horrid explanations to another time—any other day—or perhaps never speak of them at all. All she wanted now was that he would take her in his arms again and resume the sory at the point where he had broken it.

But he would not do this. He was mentally vowing to himself that his lips should never again seek hers until she knew all—yes, all. She was so white, and pure, and childlike that he could not deceive her even in the smallest particular. He could not accept a love which was, in reality, given to another man and not to himself. It was for himself that he must win her or not at all.

She was trying to read his thoughts from his

and not to himself. It was for himself that he must win her or not at all.

She was trying to read his thoughts from his face, but all she could tell was that there was something weighing upon his mind. She tried, with that sympathy which was natural to her, to adapt herself to his mood. Something was paining him, and it was for her to comfort. And so she assumed, even with this big, strong man, her love for whom was not unmingled with awe, the same sweet motherly tone that had always served her purpose so well when

spot. The beech lifted its gaunt form in the center of a little grassy knoll, It stood there quite by itself as befitted its age and reputation. It appeared just as Bob had described, a gnarled and knotted trunk, split near to the ground so as to give a quaint impression of two absurdly disproportionate legs, while on either side armlike branches were uplifted, branches that were leafy only at their extremities, making it appear as if the giant held up garlands of leaves in his hands.

One could complete the quaint figure by imagining the head between the two arms, and a few leafless twigs standing straight on end could well have passed muster for the "ogre's" hair.

Just beyond the tree the ground fell away to a little brook, a mossy dell surrounded by high banks of fern, some of which were

so tall that they easily overtopped Peggy's head. "There's the 'ogre,' " pronounced Peggy, when they stood at last by the old tree. "Can't one imagine that some faun of the wood has taken up his residence in that gnarled trunk? But I don't agree with Bob that it's a wicked or malevolent spirit, or that the 'ogre' is a proper name for the tree. No, I feel sorry for my faun, and like to imagine how he must have taken refuge here where nobody ever comes except—"
"Except lovers like ourselves," suggested George.
"I think there have been plenty of them," he added, "judging from the marks on the tree." He pointed as he spoke to the cuts and notches which appeared on the surface of the trunk, symbols of the passing of

the surface of the trunk, symbols of the passing of many lovers.

But it was no longer possible to put off the evil moment, to play at forgetfulness. The time had come when he must speak, and now George took his courage in his hands, and having found a comfortable seat for the girl on the slope beside the tree, installed himself by her side upon a knotted root that wound like a snake from out of the earth and then disappeared into a little clump of fern.

The words were very hard to speak, though she gave him all the assistance in her power.

She looked up gravely into his eyes while she held his hand tightly in hers, clasping her fingers through his so that she might tighten or relax the pressure as it seemed to be necessary.

"Now tell me, George," she said simply, "but understand that nothing can make any difference—whatever you may have to say. We love each other—and that is enough."

You love George Hilton." He had made up his , since the truth was to be spoken—the very—to come to the point at once. What was the

truth—to come to the point at once. What was the use of dallying, like an unskilful surgeon with the knife in his hand, inflicting a prolonged torment? A clean, quick cut—that was best, far best.

"You love George Hilton," he repeated, "the man who saved your father's life, the man who was the hero of your childish dreams. But what, Peggy, if I am not that man—what if the real George Hilton is dead?"

The blow was given—the knife had made its in-The blow was given-the knife had made its in-

cision into the quivering flesh. Peggy was sitting erect, but she had begun to tremble-he could feel the

erect, but she had begun to tremble—he could feel the quivering of her fingers.

"I-I don't understand. How can I suppose George Hilton dead when you are by my side?" She spoke in little gasps of pain and bewilderment.

"Listen, Peggy. Oh, my dear, my dear, let me tell you everything before you condemn. George Hilton is dead. It's this that will hurt you—you who loved him so. I never meant you to know the truth, I knew that you would accept me—as all the world has done—as the very man himself. But I couldn't lie to you, Peggy. You are too sweet, and pure, and good. I couldn't force the lie from my lips." I couldn't force the lie from my lips."

"George—Hilton dead!" The words were hardly audible. Her breast was heaving. She pressed her free hand to her heart to still the dull ache of it.

"I am a man who has lost his memory. You remember that day at Hurlingham?" George spoke hurriedly, gripping her hand tight, fearful lest she should wish to withdraw it. "It was that morning it happened. I found myself in the park—after a slight accident when I was thrown down by a taxicab-without a notion as to my true identity. People ad-dressed me as George Hilton—the likeness between us must be extraordinary. But, in the meanwhile, I had found out I was not George Hilton, I had discovered

Bob had come to her with the con- my real name. Then you passed-you made the same mistake that the others had made. And, oh, Peggy, 1 loved you the first moment I saw you. I felt as if I had really known you in the past. And then Duncan came-greeted me as an old friend. He asked me to perience-and so it was with a brave Hurlingham, where I knew I should see you again. 1 yielded to the temptation. You remember what happened that night, Peggy. I was nearly forced into saying what I had no right to say-but I resisted, for 1 was only playing a part for that day. I did not know then that George Hilton was dead."

He paused. His lips were parched. He moistened them with his tongue. Beads of perspiration stood upon his forehead.

Peggy still sat upright and her hand still lay in one may interrupt us. And you his-but it felt cold and nerveless-there was no pressure of the fingers now.

"How do you know that he is dead?" The voice was not like that of Peggy-it was the voice of a woman who had learned to suffer.

He told her-everything. How fate had conducted him to the explorer's chambers, how he had found the letter announcing Hilton's intention to kill himself. and the will by which he left his fortune to Peggy; how, because of the intensity of his love, he had determined to continue playing the part which fate had thrust upon him.

"Why did he wish to kill himself?" The question was put in the same hard voice as before.

She gave a little shudder at the George told her this too. He concealed nothing, even though he knew that he might be inflicting escaped. She was leading him down deeper pain. For must he not, like Lady Sara herself, impute murder to the man whom Peggy had idealized ery and thence to the wood. It was as a hero? But he was there to speak the whole her way, a very sweet and womanly truth. He glanced up at the "ogre" towering above way, when she guessed that any him. The uplifted arms seemed to be adjuring him to trouble was pending, to smooth it full confession. as best she could by talking of

"It must have been remorse for what he had done in a moment of passion," said George. "I feel sure that George Hilton did not love Lady Sara, and would not have killed for her sake. He left every penny he

"I am sure that he was innocent of the murder."
Peggy spoke the words firmly. "George Hilton would
not have killed wantonly. He was the best and
bravest man that ever lived." Suddenly she broke
down, wrenching her hand away from George, and
burst into a passion of tears.



"She was weeping once more-little choking sobs."

"What shall I do-what shall I do?" she moaned, rocking herself to and fro on her mossy seat. A few leaves fluttered down to her side. It was as if the "ogre" were weeping too.

George allowed her tears to flow, sitting silent by her side. It was the best thing for her to weep. Presently she turned to him with a wan smile. "Will you take me back home presently?" she mur-,mured. "I feel a little faint and my head hurts me. And I don't know what to say. I must have time to think. I'm sure that you love me-that all you did was because of your love. And you've been very good to me. You've saved me from marrying a man I dislike. You've been good to Aunt Emily, too—and to Bob. But I must have time to think—I must indeed."

George rose to his feet and extended his hand to the girl to help her to rise. "Yes," he said gravely, "I know."

"There's just one thing I want to ask." She was standing by his side now. "You say you know your true name. Will you tell me what it is?"

"I found it from a letter written by my father," he replied. "The letter was in my pocket that day in the cert." in the park, so, you see, I knew at once. And I was recognized for myself no later than yesterday. My name is George Annesley."

"George Annesley!" As she repeated the words Peggy seemed to trip. He thought she had caught her foot in the tangled fern. She would have fallen had he not caught her about the waist and supported

His remorse broke out in a heavy groan. "Oh, my poor, poor girl!" he cried. "How I have hurt you. I who love you so! Will you hate me, Peggy—you have every right to?"

But she was paying no heed to him. As soon as he had released her she had sunk down again among the bracken. She was weeping once more—little choking sobs. A sudden color had flushed her pale cheeks. And she laughed between her sobs—hysterical laughter which hurt George more than her tears.

He could not understand this fresh attack of emotion. He stood helpless by her side till, with an effort, she seemed to master herself. Her body no longer shook and her hands dropped from her face.

effort, she seemed to master herself. Her body no longer shook, and her hands dropped from her face. "Forgive me, George." She addressed him by his Christian name. Even at that moment of stress he noticed the fact. She was staring up at him with hig rounded eyes. Her lips moved—it was as if she wanted to say something which she could not put into words. "What is it. Peggy?" he asked, puzzled. She rose to her feet, unaided. Once more she seemed to hesitate, then she gave a little gasp and shook her head. He could not understand her new mood. Her eyes had been so dull, but now they shone—though this might have been the glitter of her

-though this might have been the glitter of her

"I'm better now," she said at last. "I shall be quite calm by the time we reach home. No one will suspect anything. And, George, don't let us speak of this again today"—her voice faltered—"or of our love"—she whispered the words, but his heart leaped as she spoke them—"for I could not bear it. I will write to you—you shall hear from me tomorrow. And now let us go."

Unasked, she slipped her hand in his. George lifted and pressed it to his breast, a delicious joy, to which he dared not give expression, seizing upon him.

For now he knew that she cared—in spite of all,

she cared.

Hand-in-hand they turned away. The "ogre's" uplifted arms seemed to wave them an adieu.

(CONTINUED NEXT SUNDAY.)